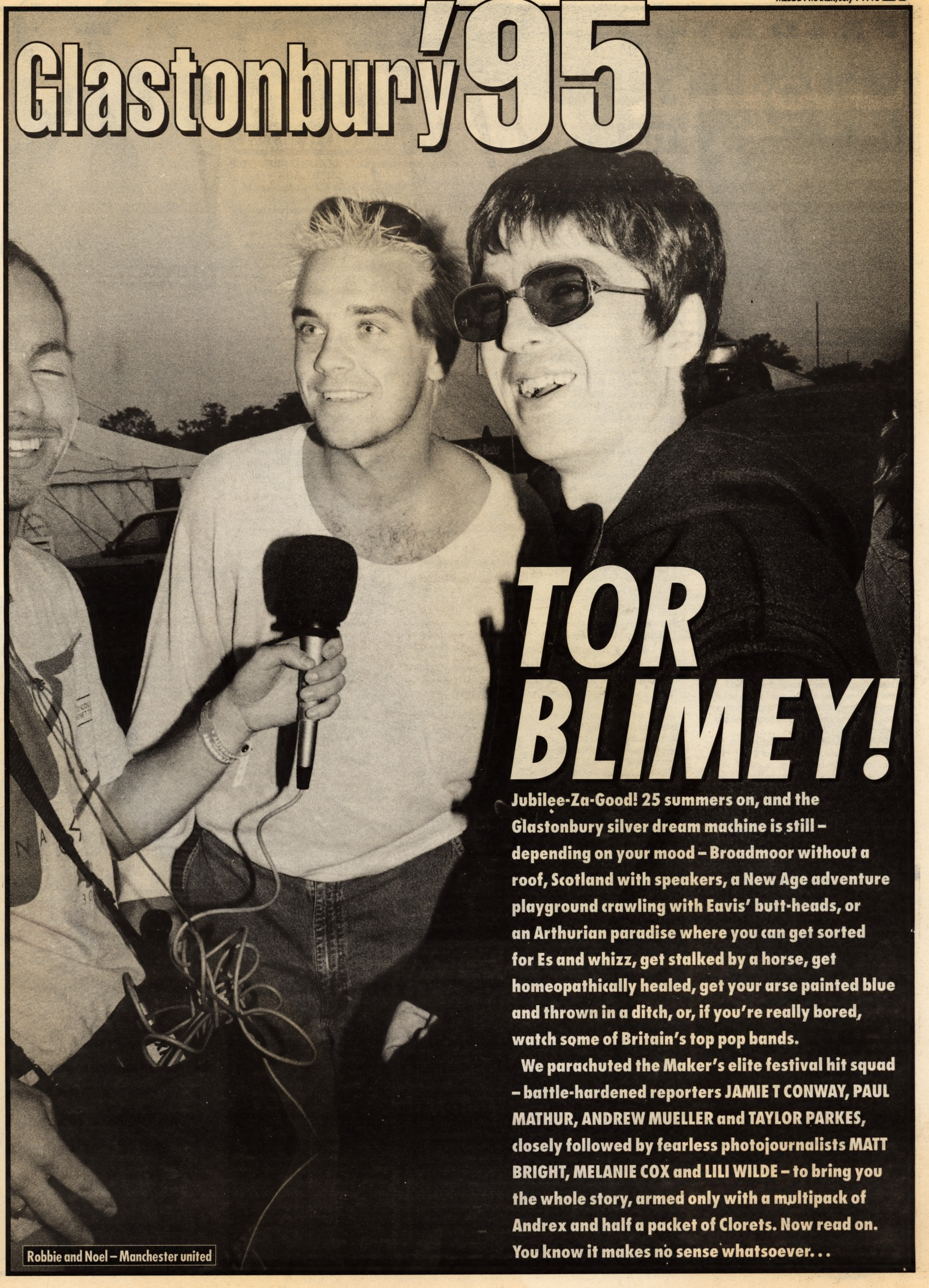
Glastonbury '95



Robbie and Noel – Manchester united

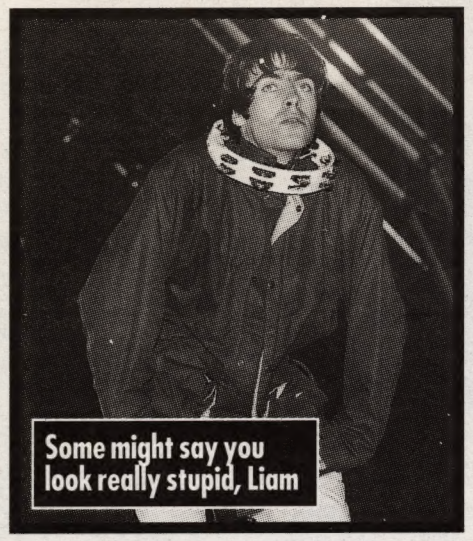
TOR BLIMEY!

Jubilee-Za-Good! 25 summers on, and the Glastonbury silver dream machine is still – depending on your mood – Broadmoor without a roof, Scotland with speakers, a New Age adventure playground crawling with Eavis' butt-heads, or an Arthurian paradise where you can get sorted for Es and whizz, get stalked by a horse, get homeopathically healed, get your arse painted blue and thrown in a ditch, or, if you're really bored, watch some of Britain's top pop bands.

We parachuted the Maker's elite festival hit squad – battle-hardened reporters JAMIE T CONWAY, PAUL MATHUR, ANDREW MUELLER and TAYLOR PARKES, closely followed by fearless photojournalists MATT BRIGHT, MELANIE COX and LILI WILDE – to bring you the whole story, armed only with a multipack of Andrex and half a packet of Clorets. Now read on. You know it makes no sense whatsoever. . .

FRIDAY Glastonbury '95

GLASTONBURY 1995 ★ HOSPITALITY ★



Some might say you look really stupid, Liam

PYRAMID STAGE

SUN! Ace music! Loads to drink! Entertaining discussion of the etymology of hot political phrase of the hour "stalking horse" with a colourful assortment of wilful, eccentric and defiantly individual characters! But enough about the drive down in Team Maker's coach.

We've missed **SPEARHEAD, SENSER and OZRIC TENTACLES:** our departure was delayed because Taylor Parkes hadn't finished styling his eyebrows. Then every time we drove past a horse, we slowed down to see if it would do any stalking. None did, though Paul Mathur claimed that one was "definitely thinking about doing some stalking later on". All is not lost, however, as we've arrived in time to see some of **THE LIGHTNING SEEDS**, who are ace, especially when they do "Life Of Riley" and you get to annoy everyone around you by putting on your best Motson or Davies and shouting "And only Matthew Le Tissier scores goals like that. . ." or "Barnes! One for the scrapbook!" or "Furlong! From fully 30 yards!" (so I'm a dreamer.) **WAR** play after that, to a crowd united by a single thought: "Who the f*** are War, anyway?"

There follows a typically joyful performance by **SINEAD O'CONNOR**. Wearing an admittedly impressive T-shirt ("If you think I'm a bitch you should see my mother"), Sinead caterwauls and bleats to no great effect, hardly faces the crowd and is the least appropriate act on a Glastonbury bill since Lou Reed's epically morbid set in 1992.

SOUL ASYLUM are next, and having already been bored to the verge of tears by the grim "Let Your Dim Light Shine" opus, I'd rather be stalked by a horse than endure them doing it again live. I catch the Bon Jovi soundalike single, "Misery", before heading up to the acoustic tent where great things, in the shape of an incendiary performance by **MIKE SCOTT**, are afoot. From beneath his big red hat, Scott – still one of the dozen most heroic talents in the entire rock pantheon – does his usual juggling act with the whimsical, beautiful and terrifying, and is wonderful. The only minor drawback is an audience that leaves one thinking that if we must be burdened by the Criminal Justice Act, there might have least been a clause in it that proscribed Dancing Like A Twat.

By the time Scott's finished, **THE BLACK CROWES** are on the main stage. They sound a bit like The Faces. Ha ha. But seriously folks, they're gruff old muso bores, getting more absurdly self-righteous and self-indulgent with every passing year.

OASIS are altogether more compelling, though not for the reasons they might prefer. Even those of us who think they're the most unbelievably over-rated entity since quadrophonic sound can't deny that the stakes they play are admirably high: three songs in, they muff the start of "Supersonic" because Liam's clowning around in the photo pit. "Are you gonna f***ing behave yourself, or what?" barks Noel, and everyone's on tip-toes, wondering yet again if Oasis are about to hit the self-destruct button. They eventually settle into an efficient set which, despite being helped along by some deranged dancing by Robbie out of Take That, is never brilliant, and is received with lukewarm affection from a dwindling crowd. There is at least a suggestion that Noel's songwriting is on an upward curve: "Some Might Say" is certainly their best recorded effort, and new songs "Roll With It" and "Hello" (which lifts from Gary Glitter's "Good To Be Back") are blessed with an impatience to top charts, stalking horses for potential greatness.

(AM)

THE SOLAR-POWERED RUMOUR MILL

So what the f*** is a stalking horse, then? Have you ever seen a horse *stalking*? And what does it do when it finally catches up with you? Neigh at you? Push its muzzle into the palm of your hand? Shag your bird, nick your crisps and knock over your pint with its long nose?

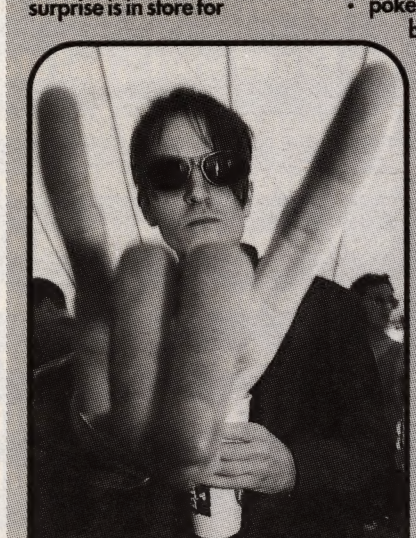
Whatever, that particularly topical slice of meaningless parliamentary jargon seemed to be on everyone's lips this weekend, pop stars and hacks alike spending many hours backstage discussing the ins and outs of the Tory leadership crisis over a quiet pint of drugs. All except **JAKE SHILLINGFORD OUT OF MY LIFE STORY**, who, on Saturday, approached the Maker posse and enquired sincerely, "Have you heard this rumour that John Major's resigned?"

But soft! Here be the lowdown on Glastonbury pop star dicking about. A humble, unassuming Maker art designer is strolling through the backstage bar. Suddenly he spies **LIAM GALLAGHER** standing in front of him, legs spread, arms outstretched, fingers beckoning. "Come on then," snarls Liam. "Eh?" gulps our man. "Come on then," repeats the beefy pop chap, unblinking. "What are you waiting for?"

"C-c-come on for what?" asks the shitting-it Makerite finally. "A waltz," spits Liam, taking him by a baffled arm and leading him in a beautifully executed terpsichorean tour of the entire backstage area.

Liam was on fine form all weekend, actually: strolling along by himself on Saturday afternoon, he is hailed by a chum: "Liam, where are you going?" "To the top, man," he replies. "To the tippy-tip-top." Friday, someone approaches him and asks about the previous night's Oasis gig in nearby Bath: "What was Bath like, Liam?" He thinks for a moment. "Shower was better. *Boom fookin' boom.*"

Night falls, and an amusing surprise is in store for



Live long and prosper, Jonny

BLUNDER OF THE WEEKEND

Jarvis Cocker's questionable navigational skills leading the stage-seeking Pulp van into a field full of Pulp fans, who immediately surround it and won't let them pass. Yeah, so much for common people, eh Jarv?

CHRISSIE HYNDE OUT OF THE PRETENDERS, who returns to the van she was camping in to find that it's been driven away by her mates, who have left the site. Meanwhile, as

Strummertime blues

ROBBIE OUT OF TAKE THAT enjoys a game of football in front of considerably more spectators than you'll find in Selhurst Park of a Saturday afternoon, a kid strides up to **JARVIS COCKER** and asks to have his photo taken with him. After signing an autograph, Jarvis asks him whether he enjoyed Pulp's performance the previous night. "No," replies the kid brightly, "I've always thought you were complete shite." And with that he strolls away.

T-SHIRT OF THE WEEKEND

"It's Time For All Honest Citizens To Turn To Crime"

Wusses of the weekend: **THE PRODIGY**. 5am, **SIMON OUT OF 'SWEAR** and friends frolic merrily backstage. A dishevelled Prodge poke their heads out of their tour bus window and shout "Oi! Can you keep the noise down please? We're trying to get some sleep in here!" Wussywussywuss.

Another battle that develops through the weekend is an unofficial Who's The Youngest, Cockiest Little Bugger In Pop competition. It's not, however, won by **GAZ OUT OF SUPERGRASS**, who's been telling a porky or two about his age, so we've heard. Besides, on being approached by a Maker snapper for a photo, he actually runs away. OK, so she did follow him into a toilet and ask for a shot of him "having a slash", but dammit, this is rock'n'roll! Others did better.

SIMON OUT OF MENSWEAR, visibly restraining a smirk, up to **CHRIS ROBINSON OUT OF THE BLACK CROWES**, adopts a look of wide-eyed awe and says "Excuse me – aren't you Bobby Gillespie?" Then he runs away.

This is topped by the pocket-sized singer out of soon-come New 'Swear **BRATTISH**, who approaches **JOHNATHAN KING** – standing on his own at the bar – and says "Your clothes are crap." "No, I'm just an eccentric", smarms King. The Brattish Boy stares contemptuously at him for a couple of seconds, sneers "You've got no friends", and strolls off.

But no one can match **NICK** and **BEN** out of the awesome **CHARLIE**, a new band (managed, apparently, by Simon Out Of Menswear) so young that when they arrive on Saturday, they are refused *service at the bar* (NB: we have NOT made this up). Instead, they walk up to **MICK JONES WHO USED TO BE IN THE CLASH**, punch him in the shoulder and shout "F*** off, old man", before toddling over to **MARK OUT OF RIDE** and saying "Are you Mark out of Ride? You're a big load of f***ing shit" (Taylor Parkes, pound signs chiming in his eyes, immediately hatches plans to cradle-snatch four toddlers, hand them toy musical instruments, christen them **SHANDY** and persuade them to blag it into this year's Reading and run a six-foot cutlass through **NEIL YOUNG**'s head in front of some journalists). By Sunday, people are actually going up to each other and whispering "have you heard about this band Charlie? I've heard they're *wild*." Pop stardom, kids – it's a piece of piss. Remember, you heard it here first.

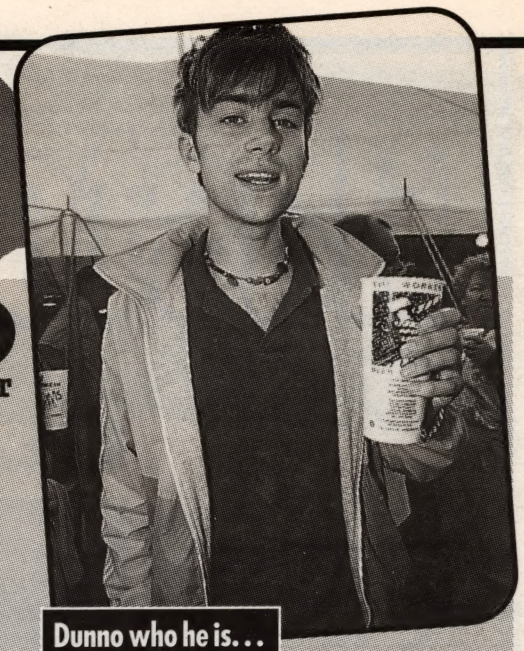
What you didn't hear, unfortunately, was **TANYA DONELLY** standing tipsy by the bar, suddenly turning to a nearby Maker chap and remarking "I've got a penis." Nor the laughter that greeted **DAMON OUT OF BLUR** when he turned up unannounced wearing a pair of shoes shaped like enormous spatulas. Nor **NOEL GALLAGHER** and **EVAN DANDO** sitting in a tent with acoustic guitars and a tiny group of mates, playing a Gallagher oddity called "Purple Parallelogram". But we did.

Finest moment of all though, for us, was meeting **THE BLOKE WHO THOUGHT UP THAT KELLOGG'S CORNFLAKES SLOGAN "WHY WAIT UNTIL BREAKFAST?"** (he is, apparently, the brother of one of **THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS**) Apparently, the idea came to him while on E, when he got peckish at 3am. True!

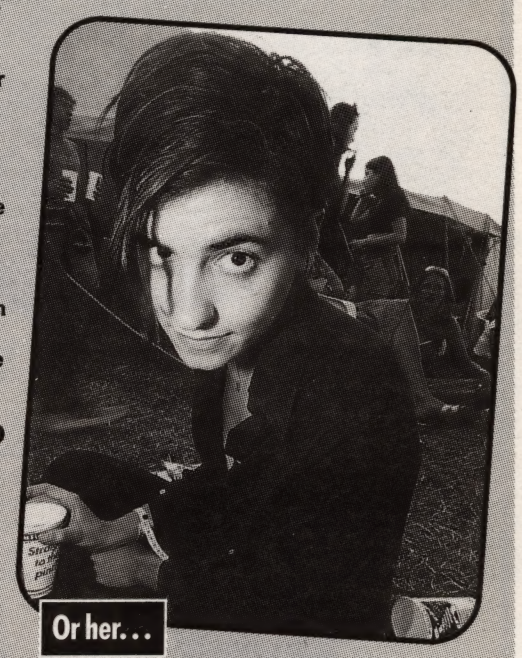
Anyway – barmaid! Three pints of snog and a pack of Stalking Horse flavour crisps, if you don't mind – *we're off out of here.*

PHRASE OF THE WEEKEND

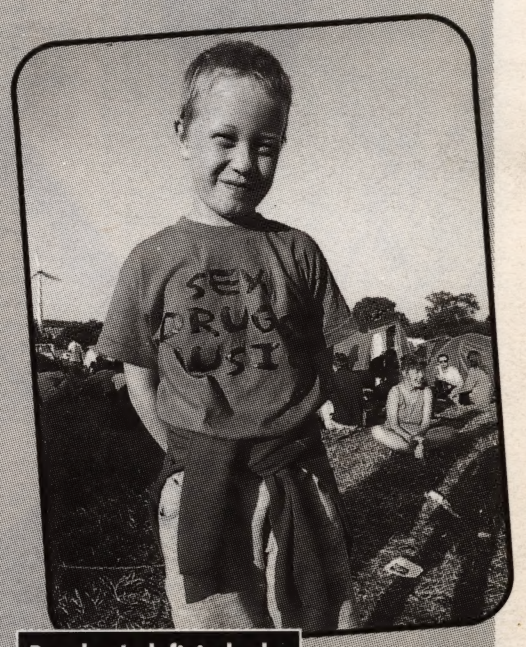
"Don't look now, but there's a stalking horse behind you"



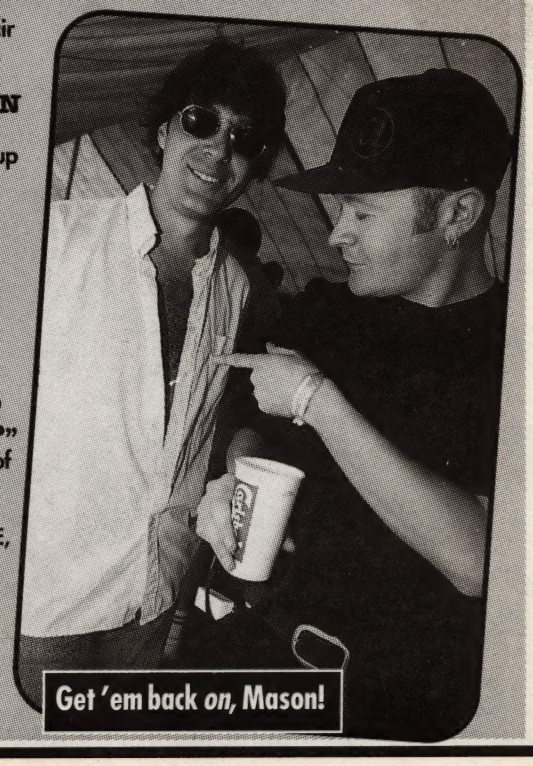
Dunno who he is. . .



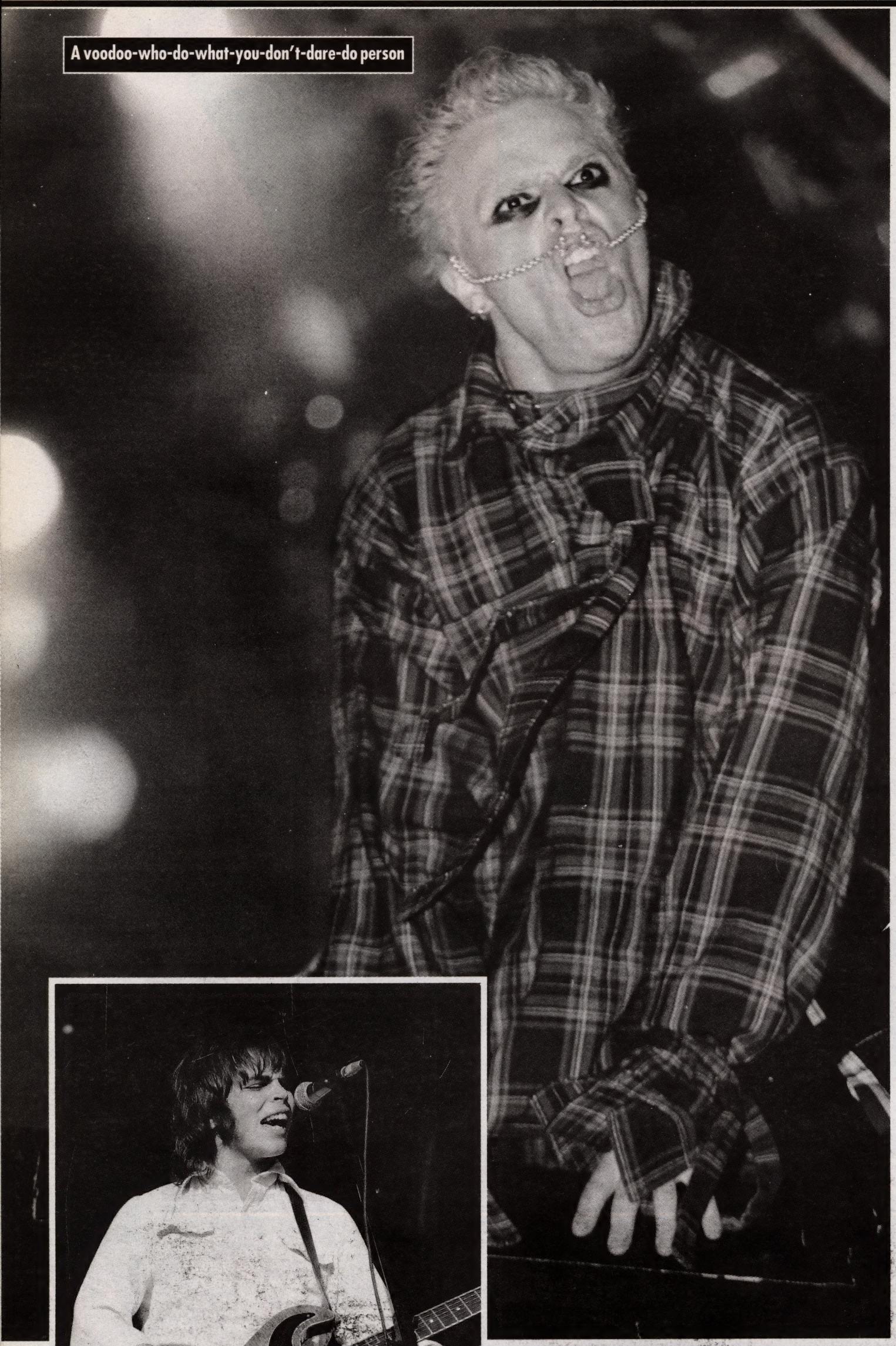
Or her. . .



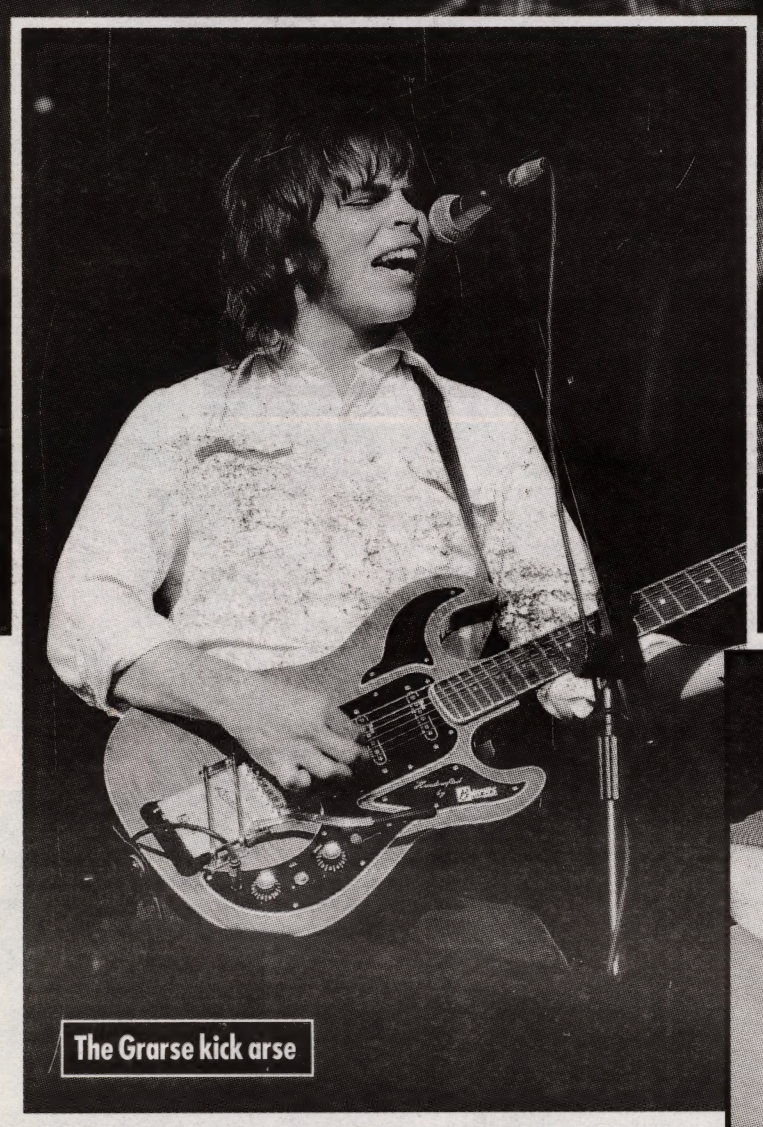
But that's definitely the singer out of Shandy



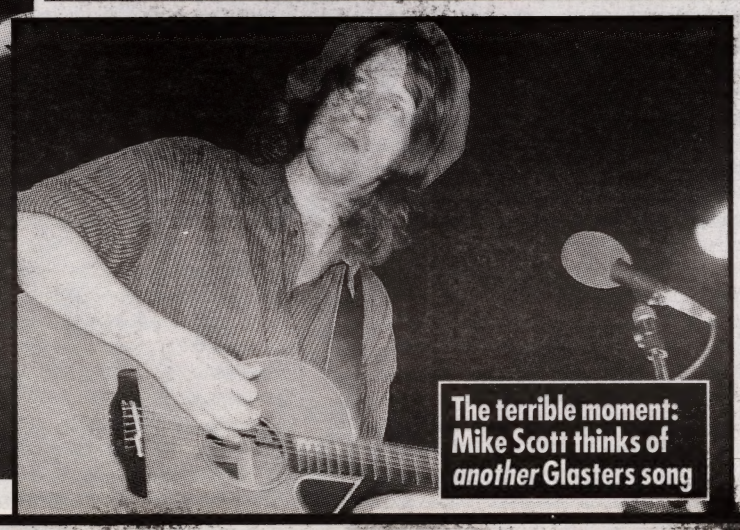
Get 'em back *on*, Mason!



A voodoo-who-do-what-you-don't-dare-do person



The Grarse kick arse



The terrible moment: Mike Scott thinks of *another* Glasters song

SECOND STAGE

SO it's not all back to mine afterwards then. Just about every weekend between now and September you'll find yourself sitting in some field somewhere, blankly toying with the veracity of Edwyn Collins' observation that, "*It's so detestable, it's a summer festival*". Then you'll buy a Carter T-shirt, eat a burger that may well be made out of corduroy and go home with mud under your eyelids.

Unless it's Glastonbury. No festival experience elsewhere prepares you for the experience of plonking yourself on a ley line in a place that will, over the course of three days, simulate heaven, hell, Broadmoor without a roof and Scotland with speakers. You'll be talking hoarse about it to your grandchildren one day and, like National Service, or Bosnia or measles, you'll feel like self-righteousness is your mate. And you'll go back time and time again.

There used to be some sort of delineation between the stars and the wannabes, between bands who learnt to live with the tiresome responsibility of a fleet of helicopters and those who chirpily accepted that a lukewarm Cornish pasty in a transit van on the outskirts of Kings Lynn was reward enough. Making it used to at least have signposts.

These days the stars of tomorrow might as well keep the cab running, prepare themselves for the world/oyster thing, like, now. Apprenticeship has become a synonym for shilly-shallying and posterity may well mark 1995 as the year that careerism pressed the fast forward.

So, the bands on what is ostensibly the "second" stage are only half heartedly expected to renounce egalitarianism for some sort of old-school self-debasement. Knowing their place, even if it's in a field the size of Luxembourg. And most of the acts on show know that the difference between themselves and the alleged crowd pullers is a matter more of on-site geography than hard-earned destiny. Potential's panning out all over the place.

BOREDOMS, thank the Lord, are unlikely to ever soundtrack more than the cushioned plod of The Kids wondering whether it's an entirely good idea to smoke that shoe polish before putting up the tent. Boredoms are from Japan. Like you care.

FLAMING LIPS are arty and American. Their name is almost an anagram of A Ming Spliff. Spooky in a sort of where's-that-bleeding-tent sort of way.

You get the feeling that **ASH** aren't far from clambering towards some sort of affecting resonance, but today their enthusiasm is muted by staying up studying for exams. They're Irish and they still haven't found what they're looking for. As Mr The Edge will confirm.

SHED SEVEN get the sort of stick round these parts that ought to be reserved for the dumb lunks who think that Cud were cool. They're only sporadically exciting, but Rick Witter's a diamond geezer and our newly aligned chakras generate tolerance.

Even the grumpiest old plum couldn't fail to be exhilarated by **DODGY**. It's still the start of the season and they're already booked as the band most likely to make you forget about getting tetanus from the groundsheet. "What Have I Done?", "Making The Most Of" and "UK RIP" turn Somerset into a trampoline and by the time "Staying Out For The Summer" and a pointed cover of The Beatles' "Revolution" roll along, even the skulking bores at the back are signing away their first born. The big stage next year for the people's favourites, or else.

"*Sleep around/If we like/But we're alright*". Hey hey it's the monkeys. "Alright" is **SUPERGRASS**' finest moment to date and you can understand why they're Pet Shop Boy Chris Lowe's favourite band. There's a smart *ennui* that makes you think of what the PSB's might have sounded like had they got together at school and determinedly rehearsed behind the bike sheds with 10 Rothmans and The Big Book Of Weird Hairdoes. That at least half a dozen of their songs rip off The Jam's "Private Hell" is forgiven in a mass demonstration of teenage adulation. We all have a fag. Then put it out. Supergrass Rule OK.

Dusk topples and **SLEEPER** are faced with the task of matching Supergrass' snotty precision. The unfairly maligned Louise does her best to expand on the instinctive force of spiky pop, but Sleeper bluster rather too much f or their own good. And there's an alarming dorky course bubbling under their chunky racket. They should surge for a bit.

BELLY are, well, just like they've always been. They're juggling with the wonderful "Slow Dog" while a mangy old slow dog in the crowd just juggles. Tanya's ability to make ravishingly inventive pop crouches all too often in the safety of the ragged din. The Stepford Punters mosh on regardless.

THE PRODIGY are one of the finest groups in the country. "Voodoo People" is an object lesson in how to squeeze breakbeat techno into the sort of shapes that entice your huddled masses and their breakneck performance is truly something to behold. I behold it for a bit then hail a hippy to piggyback, for the price of a bun, across to the big stage for the flawed, but thrilling buzz of Oasis. This time last year the latter shuffled here just before the sun came over the yardarm, now they're topping the bill. The Prodigy want (and deserve) to do the same.

It's dark and a shifty geezer in dungarees has persuaded me to get a "Nuclear Power? No thanks!" tattoo on my bell end. HOLD THE LINE – Toto, I don't think we're in the Bull and Gate any more. I sleep fitfully as Glastonbury rocks apace.

(PM)

SATURDAY Glastonbury '95

PYRAMID STAGE

A VIRGIN, I. Barely able to contain my excitement, I demolish crusties' tents and trample over women and children as I rush to see my first! band at my first! festival, forgetting it'll be: **EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL**.

Hmmmm.

But perhaps, given the tacit endorsements of their music from Massive Attack and Jeff Buckley (who joins them for "I Know It's Over") , it's time for a reappraisal. Perhaps we should hail them as on of the country's most unjustly maligned bands. Or perhaps we should note "Protection" was tedious, Jeff Buckley would happily harmonise with a tone deaf Rangers fan singing "Here We Go" and that **ETBG** are so monstrously polite that if one of them caught someone fucking their partner they'd excuse themselves and serve tea and doughnuts afterwards.

I really should hate **THE BOO RADLEYS** now.

By their own admission, they've deliberately spurned experimental material like "Lazarus" and made a craven lunge for commercial success with "Wake Up Boo!" an album consisting of the sort of slackhappy, saccharin anthems I always hated the Beatles for. Yes, I really should hate the Boo Radleys now, especially when the aforementioned sounds so unimpeachable today. But you know what?

I do. Ha! Fooled you!

JEFF BUCKLEY's still too unsullied, too compassionate to really rub my lamp. I want fear and loathing, dread and desire, a stubborn, vindictive refusal to understand. Some HATE in his love songs. And isn't it time he wrote some new material?

PJ HARVEY. Where to begin? I should mention how her reluctance to align herself with the feminist movement has freed her from the restrictions on her artistic expression that would inevitably bring, how by speaking for no one but herself she can speak for every one. How sexy she looks in that pink leotard, how "Down By the Water" is one of the most sinister things I've heard and her primal scream during "Meet Ze Monsta" is as blood chilling as Black Francis once was. So I have. God, I'm clever.

'Is this how the future feels/Or is it just 20,000 people standing in a field'
– Pulp

ORBITAL are next, and they're great and everyone's dancing but I'm too pissed off to enjoy it because some stupid shit just f***ed me over the head with a flare. Humanity. Don't you love it?

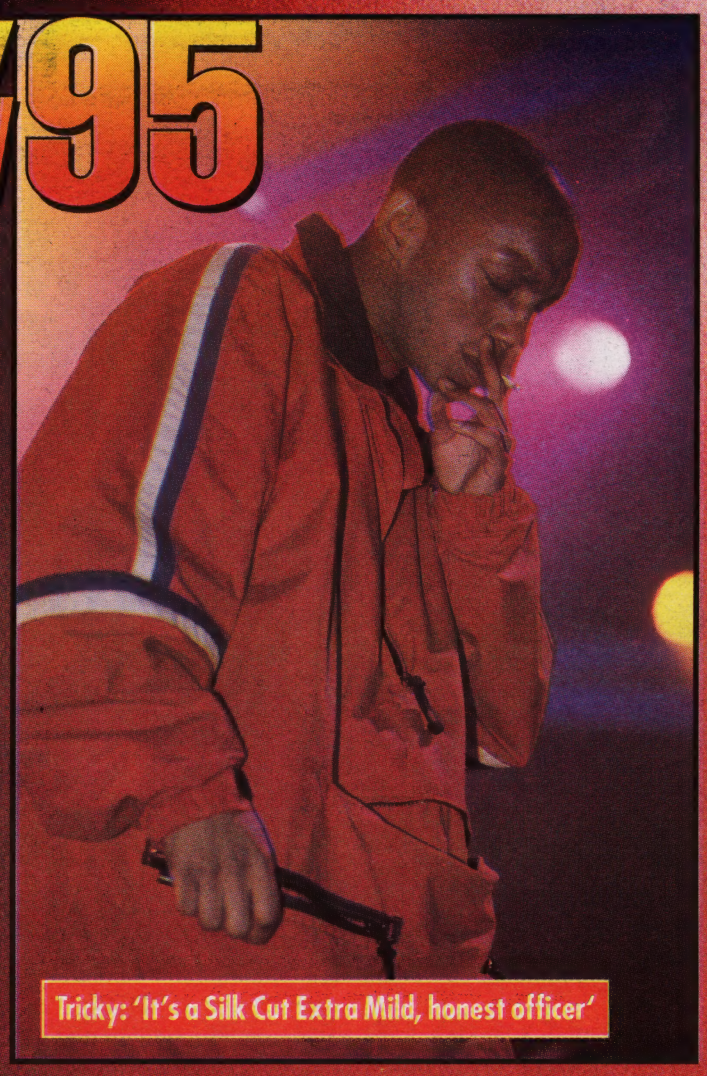
But five seconds of **PULP** and I'm flying because this is a band whose time has indisputably come. They open with "Do You Remember the First Time" and I'm thinking yeah, because it's now, and they do this great new one called "Sorted For Es And Whizz" which goes "*Is this how the future feels/Or is it just twenty thousand people standing in a field*" . and I remember how I always thought it was appropriate they never won the Mercury Music Prize because like, their songs are about the has beens and nearly wases, and there's "Pink Glove" and "Babies" and just when I think it can't go any higher, this can't get any better, there's "Common People" and I. . .

OOOOOOOOOH. AAAAAAAAH. OOOOOOOOH.

Once it's over, I light a cigarette, blow smoke rings, and watch them drift serenely skyward.

Not bad. Not bad at all.

(JTC)



Tricky: 'It's a Silk Cut Extra Mild, honest officer'

Peej rocks it Avengers-style

Offspring. *Jesus*

JAZZ WORLD STAGE

"LOOK, I really have to find the Jazz World Stage." Who the f*** said that? The open mouths, pointed fingers and DNA evidence insist that it was me. Jazz? World stage? Oh shit.

My friend Mel agrees to prise my fingers from the fencing and drags me across several time zones, at least a dozen counties and more fields than all the cows in Christendom are ever going to need, until we arrive at a stage of stadium proportions. **TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND** are up there persuading me once again that "a little bit of this and a little bit of that" doesn't work the same with music as it used to do at school with poster paint. For one thing, they're not the colour of baby pooh. If you can catch them in a club near you, you'd be well advised to submerge yourself in their kaleidoscopic vibe.

Unfortunately, the Jazz World Stage at Glastonbury strips them of the exotic intimacy that constitutes their greatest strength. And, while many of the acts over the weekend have, thankfully, very little to do with gawky horns, endless drum solos and the general anaesthesia of either Jazz or World Music, you still can't get much of a buzz from having to watch proceedings a couple of days' walk from the stage.

Especially when you realise that everyone around you appears to be living in the Middle Ages. You feel a freak cos you're not wearing tie dye or signing up for a bit of jousting. You're the only person for miles who doesn't really see the point of brushing up on some circus skills over a bottle of pomegranate perry. Mad people tumble out of the shrubbery, an eight-piece trombone outfit strikes up in Greek national dress and, still sober, you notice that, with a hundred acres at their disposal, someone has chosen to pitch their tent in a ditch. A women in a 20-foot high papier mâché swan costume comes up and asks for a cigarette. It's a wide-eyed cross between "The Name Of The Rose" and preliminary heats of "It's A Knockout". Stuart Hall cackles manically in your head as you're almost run over by a man dressed as a stork in a hearse. He tries to persuade you to enter a 48-hour mime-walking-against-the-wind competition. Freeform jazz without the instruments. Everywhere smells of cabbage and skunk, but I'm consoled by a Bible flapping open in the wind. Ezekiel 4:12 says: "Thou shalt it eat as barley cakes and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man."

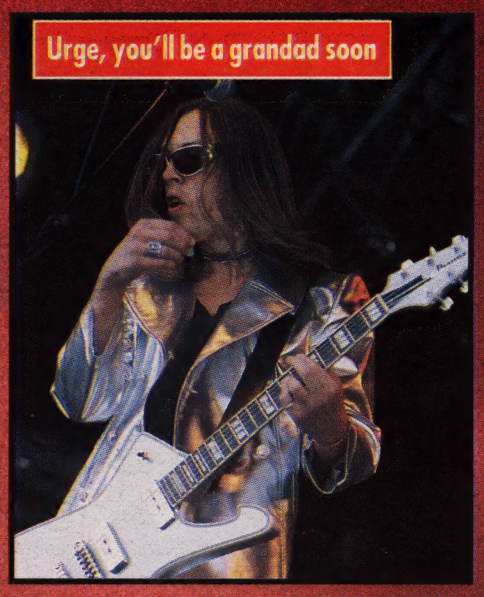
"No, really, a hot dog will be fine," I mumble as "the good times" just keep on coming.

FREAK POWER turn up, tune in and fanny around with their bonkers funk-by-numbers, waiting slightly less than a lifetime before the singer realises that even his fellow band members have got bored and wandered off to buy some more ridiculous clothes. Excellence? Not as such.

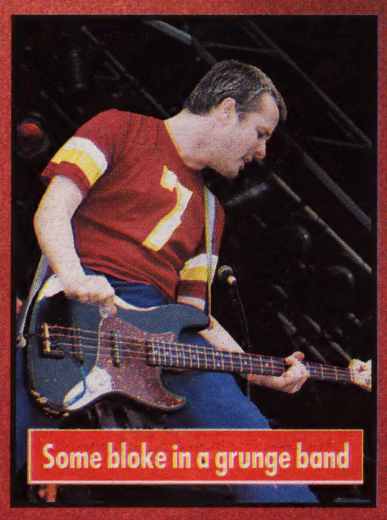
TRICKY's a rum fellow. Especially when you need the Hubble satellite to get anything like a close-up look. On record his bouncy beats are more than a match for both his Bristol peers and a fair few worldwide contemporaries. Live he's never going to match it, settling instead for just standing a really long way away and pacing up and down for a bit. I push my way through the crowd, see a sign saying "East Anglia Welcomes Careful Drivers" and sit down to cry. Maybe I should have done some drugs.

(PM)

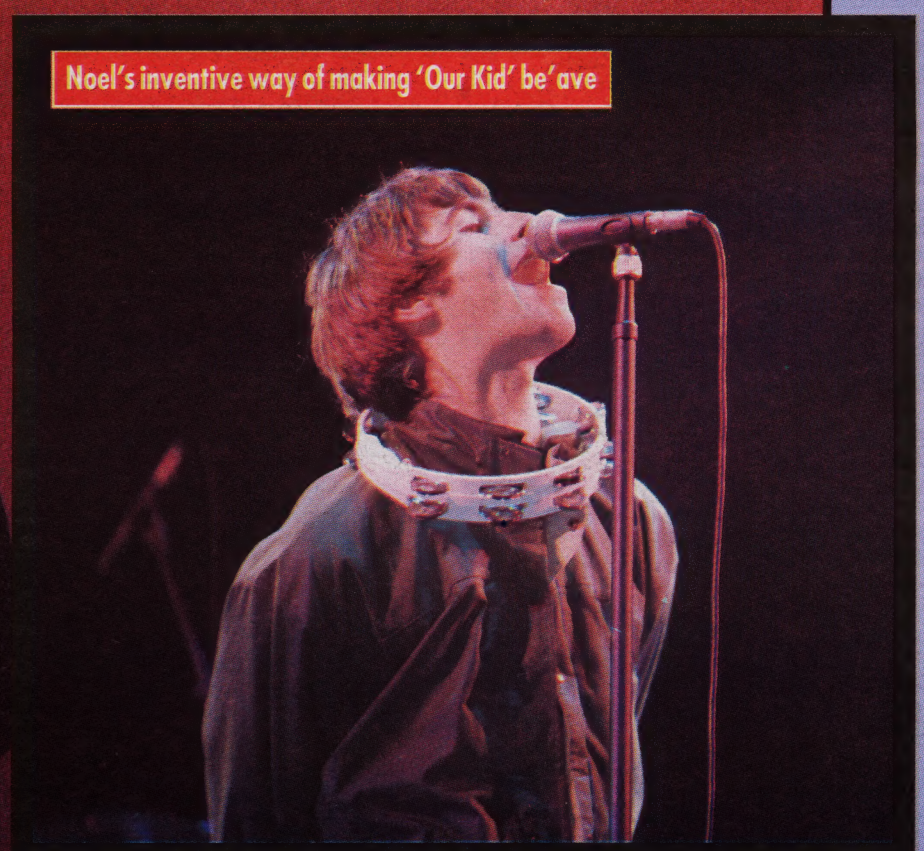
Chief suspect in the 'who broke John Squire's arm?' case



Urge, you'll be a grandad soon



Some bloke in a grunge band



Noel's inventive way of making 'Our Kid' be'ave

THE DANCE TENT

THERE'S a naturally nomadic rhythm to Glastonbury, a constantly moving mass of people driven from site to site by the cyclical inducement of hunger, boredom and the ever-approaching threat of a cloud of pooh from the nearest toilets. Over the three days, the dance tent is permanently packed, the crowd only thinning when rumours filter through of a trampoline in the Bosom Field.

There's plenty of punters perfectly delighted to spend the duration grooving glassy eyed to an array of DJs and dance acts covering the spectrum from hard techno to, like, really, really hard techno. Arms wave distractedly in front of glassy eyes, sustenance gets forgotten and entire families get scoped to the purging power of deliciously weird noises. At one point on Saturday night, a Scandinavian DJ delivers a series of bleeps like Björk in morse and several thousand people combust. There's an energy that the rest of the festival can only occasionally equal.

So, the headlines are supposed to be about Pulp's velvet elegance, Menswear's spectacular pop frenzy, the reassuring thrills of Dodgy and The Boo Radleys, and the way that The Verve and The Charlatans transcended prejudice. But it would be unfair to ignore two extraordinary, memorable performances in the dance tent.

FLUKE are the first to astound. Cleverly filtering conventional song structures through a riot of rib-rattling eurotrance, they reiterate their status as the country's most underrated dancefloor magicians. "Electric Guitar", a new song called "Tosh" and the classic "Slid" manage to persuade all lucky enough to be present that the Young Gods could meet New Order round Giorgio Moroder's imagination and it would sound f***ing brilliant. They're ready to rumble.

The DJ roster is impeccable with **DARREN EMERSON** and **CHARLIE HALL** the most invigorating manipulators of the senses. Apart, inevitably, from **RICHIE HAWTIN**. He's supersonic. Saturday night he threatens to blow both speakers and minds from the DJ booth, proving that you can still have soul at a million miles an hour. The next day, the King Of New Detroit Techno tells us he's called **PLASTIKMAN** and rocks the house like a platoon of jumbo jets. Just when you think things can't get faster or harder or more exciting, they do. It's a marvellous vindication of just why electricity was invented. Even if you find yourself jiggling in shopping centres days later. A triumph.

(PM)

'The crowd only thins when rumours filter through of a trampoline in the Bosom Field'

NME STAGE

THE Glastonbury festival is, by and large, an absolute joy, a melting pot bubbling with ideals admirable and idiotic, people entertaining and irritating, sanitation appalling and revolting. You would not, unfortunately, get a even a glimpse of all Glastonbury's sparkling facets by observing the grim parade of nobodies who hauled their carcasses across this stage today. A more paranoid correspondent would be forced to the conclusion that his Reviews Editor and the magazine downstairs were colluding in some monstrous plot to rob him of what little sanity he still possessed. So, apologies in advance for the fact that what follows is not in keeping with Glastonbury's unfailingly upful vibe, but the United Nations have gone into emergency session to enact swift retaliatory action against lesser atrocities than today's line-up. Put it this way: if it's sad that **THE SHAMEN** were headlining today – like, what year is this? – it's certifiably f***ing tragic that, given the quality of the rest of the bill, they deserved to be.

311 and **SOUL COUGHING** get things off to an inauspicious start: the latter sound like Stump, and the former like nothing much at all. They're followed by two of Britpop's most heinous timewasters of the moment, **SKUNK ANANSIE** and **THESE ANIMAL MEN**. Skunk Anansie at least have the virtue of a compelling front figure. This doesn't make up for the grinding earache they dish up by way of musical fare, but at least they're operating at slightly more rarefied heights than the irredeemable TAM, whose feeble punk sputterings sound even more useless in these wide open spaces than they do in the confines of a club, where claustrophobia can occasionally be passed off as intensity. **LIVE**, the American alternative supernova who'd have to run naked down Downing Street firing shoulder-slung rocket-launchers to stand any chance of getting arrested in this country, play next. They suck.

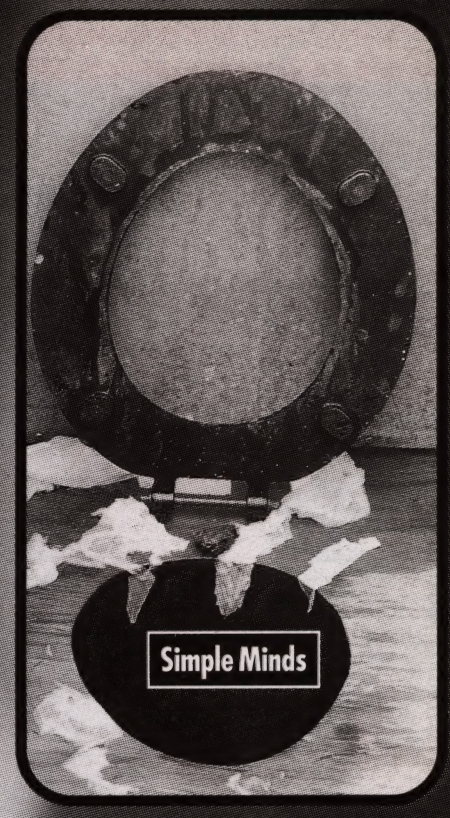
And then, in an uncanny and supremely cruel reflection of life in general, just when a chap thought it couldn't get any worse, it did. **ZION TRAIN** play. An ineffectual ambient/reggae outfit fronted by some daffy graduate of the Chumbawamba school of political science, they encourage us to raise two fingers to passing police helicopters – wooh, gimme danger – and tell us about how, y'know, John Major has resigned, so we have to, like, come together as one, and stuff. As if Major is relinquishing power to turn Britain forthwith into an anarcho-syndicalist agrarian commune. As if his power-play or Zion Train's twee adolescent rhetoric is going to make the blindest bit of difference. Try reading a newspaper, chowderheads. **DREAD ZONE** sound as you'd expect, all booms and dubs and echoes and no semblance of form or meaning whatsoever, and I'll be round with the rod of correction forthwith. Worthy dullards **SPEARHEAD** follow with the second of the approximately 5,000 appearances they seemed to have pencilled in for the weekend.

It's around here that the fun really starts. **WEEZER**, **URGE OVERKILL** and **OFFSPRING** are the three American bands who have, along with the eminently superior Green Day, benefited most from the fallout of Kurt Cobain's death. As the relentless melancholy articulated by the first wave of grunge now seems distinctly discomfiting, wry, knowing irony seems a more attractive refuge than ever. Probably fair enough, but for two problems. The first is that watching Americans trying to be wry, knowing and ironic is like watching the Swiss trying to be spontaneous, Serbs trying to be friendly or Germans trying to be funny: it's uncomfortable for them and embarrassing for anyone watching. The second, not entirely unrelated, is that wry, knowing irony is what British pop excels at, and now more than ever, so all that sweaty hod-carriers like Weezer (who, yes, obviously know a genius video director), Urge Overkill (who, yes, obviously know a genius tailor) and Offspring (who, yes, obviously have pictures of God in bed with John Selwyn Gummer or something) are doing today is selling faulty refrigerators to the Eskimos. Certainly, the crowds for all are sparse and seem thoroughly underwhelmed.

The day hobbles to a close with performances from **GALLIANO** and **THE SHAMEN**, who both seem unbelievably dated despite being only a few years past their sell-by dates. Galliano's muso noodlings aren't actually offensive, one supposes, and The Shamen, now much more a strictly ambient concern, have some cool fake alien icebergs on stage and go quite well with the fireworks going off in the background, but they're a band whose time has passed, and there's a here and a now happening bigtime somewhere else – on the main stage, Pulp are signing the guest book at Heaven's gate – so f***'em all, and the horses they stalked in on.

(AM)

SUNDAY Glastonbury '95


Simple Minds

PYRAMID STAGE

SUNDAY at Glastonbury is traditionally the day that the bill is kicked off by a small orchestra of regional municipal no-marks parping pointlessly away and an anodyne local choir chirruping away to an audience of two dozen far-gone casualties who think they're still dancing to The Prodigy, and this year is no exception: stand up and sod off **THE WINCANTON TOWN BAND** and **AVALON STATE CHOIR**. Probably only three different surnames between the lot of them. **THE BOOTLEG BEATLES** follow. They impersonate The Beatles for a bit. Still, The Boo Radleys have done all right out of it, ha ha ha.

Every time I get sent to review a festival, I end up reviewing the day **THE SAW DOCTORS** are playing. I can't imagine they're any happier about this than I am, and wild horses stalking as hard as they could would have no hope of dragging me within a mile of their grim hayseed bluster. Excitingly, there's something new to dislike about them this time out: a cover of The Undertones' "Teenage Kicks", delivered by the singer as if he's trying to shoo cows off a railway track. The unbelievably interesting **TANITA TIKARAM** continues with the improbable cover versions theme, closing her riveting set with a tilt at Herman's Hermits' "I'm Into Something Good". Everything else she does I forget while she's playing it.

Preliminaries thus dispensed with, the aristocracy are upon us. **JIMMY PAGE & ROBERT PLANT** prove some way more absorbing than anyone sane would have had reason to expect. Plant can still sing, and the boy Page's megaton fretboard ramblings have retained a certain winsome charm over the centuries. There's some dull muso fiddling, and the version of The Doors' epically dopey "Break On Through" was something I could cheerfully have lived without, but the "Dazed & Confused" and "Kashmir" they deliver this evening have lost none of the apocalyptic comic opera qualities of prime Zeppelin. As might have been predicted, they leave to a thunderous ovation. Not a word I extend lightly to men old enough to be my father who still wear leather trousers, but, well: respect.

SIMPLE MINDS' set sounds bloody great from the backstage hospitality tent. I dare say it sounded even better from about, say, Northampton.

And so to **THE CURE**, playing their first British show for years. As is nearly always the case, nothing's changed and so has everything. The new drummer (ex-My Life Story) and new keyboardist (ex-, er, The Cure) are yet to make an impact on the band's sound, and the two new songs I caught before having to leg it after a deadline – one possibly called "Jupiter Crash" – sound a fairly measured progression from the absurdly under-rated "Wish". Really though, as they waltz through "Just Like Heaven", "Pictures Of You", "Fascination Street" and "Lullaby", their real gift as a live group is their precious ability to make someone standing amid a hundred thousand others feel utterly alone. Glastonbury's one-planet one-people communal vibe being all very well up to a point, you understand, but after three days, you're grateful for whatever consumptive solitude you're offered.
(AM)

Skinny Bob

THIS HIPPY STUFF: IS IT ALL A LOAD OF OLD SHITE THEN OR WHAT?

TAYLOR PARKES and My Life Story's JAKE SHILLINGFORD venture out of the backstage area into Cranky Avalon and attempt to find... *themselves*

IT can get scary sometimes. For a mollycoddled fancy-pants townie unused to the *coontree wayyyyyys*, exploring Glasters – *proper* Glasters, the square mile beyond the bands reserved for tree-worshippers, mushroom-munchers, people who play ridiculous-looking musical instruments and middle-aged twats in organic shoes who let their children call them by their first name... it takes a brave heart and a lot of drugs.

Being possessed of one of these, I am called upon to venture forth and find out exactly what goes on out there. Needing moral support, I instruct a passing stranger: "Go forth into yonder backstage, boy, find me a man's man, a no-nonsense, salt-of-the-earth type to ease this passage through the heathen lands!"

Thirty seconds later, he returns with Jake Shillingford out of My Life Story. Doh!

"I'll do it!" grins Jake, tossing his hair and straightening the lapels of his velvet jacket. "I fancy being like Lenny Henry reporting from Somolia." Sorted! Off we trot!

500 yards in: a man with a beard shaped like a croissant playing a didgeridoo. F***. 1,000 yards in: a naked child pisses on some blankets. Ah. 1004 yards: two girls playing bongos and holding a sign saying **"WE WANT MUSHROOMS"**. "You want shooting, more like" we quip in passing. They take it in the spirit in which it was intended. And start crying.

A tent advertising "Eco-Friendly Transport" looks promising: getting close, we realise that there's a Sinclair C5 parked outside. Across the way stands a revolting sculpture made out of bent bits of chrome. Jake pauses to check his reflection in it. People stare at him as if this is an odd thing. A dwarf in a tuxedo scuttles past, meaninglessly.

I decide to get my cold healed in the Healing Tent. "Where's the healing tent, mate?" I ask a juggler. "Over there", he replies, "next to the bald man in the top hat."

Inside, a bloke with an REO Speedwagon hairdo interrogates me for 20 minutes about my symptoms, then disappears for a bit. He returns with "a free homeopathic remedy": a bag of white pills which, on later examination, turn out to be *those little sugar balls you decorate cakes with*. I laugh merrily and sell them to some students for £20 each.

That, as far as I can tell, is the chief difference between their world and ours – in one, you rip people off, but have the hypocrisy to get righteous about it because you stay wilfully skint, while in the other, you make a tidy profit which you can then spend on a range of consumer goods. Sad. True. So. What.

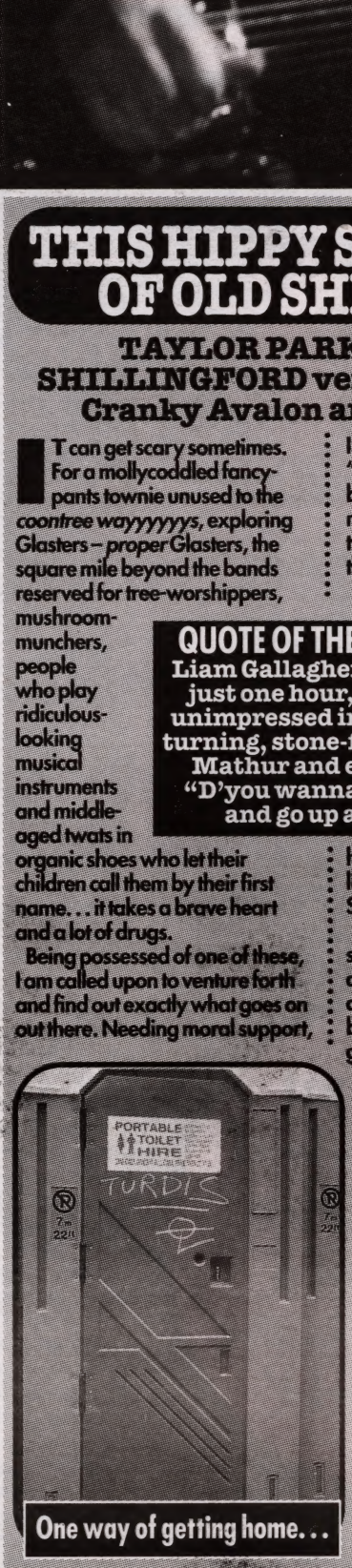
Leaving the Healing Tent, I look around for my compadre. He's cracked. I run over and physically haul him away from the bald man. "You *arse!*" screams Jake, pointing a finger at his ridiculous top hat. "You absolute *arse!*" We split. Psychologically bruised, but perhaps a little more in touch with ourselves.

When we finally reach the civilised world, two thirtysomethings are coming the other way. They halt at the gate.

"Oh no darling", says the woman, "let's not go in there. It's full of *hippies*."

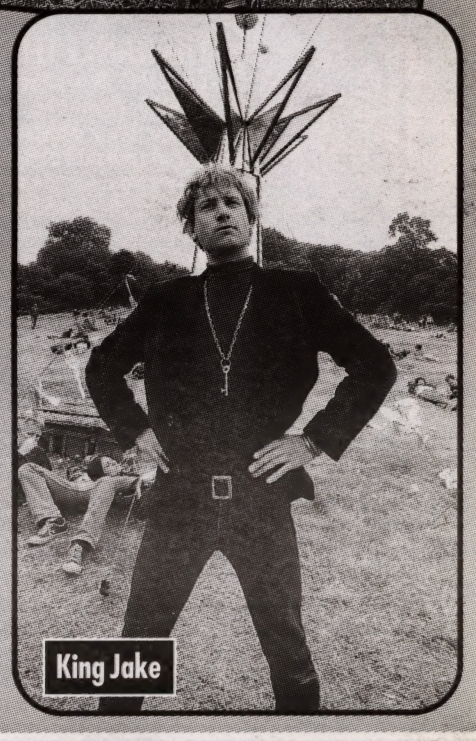
Oh brave new world!

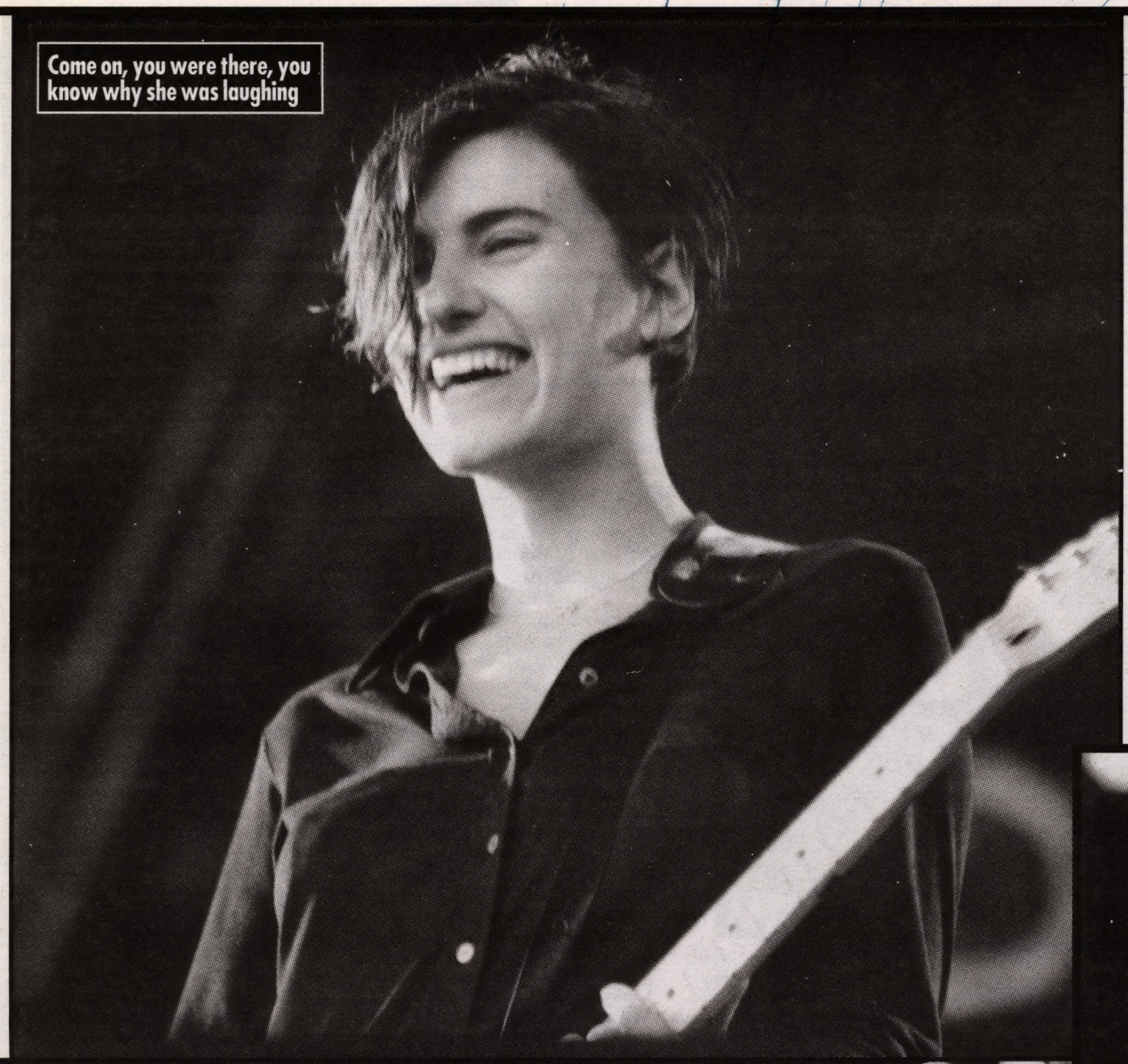
QUOTE OF THE WEEKEND
Liam Gallagher, on site for just one hour, squinting unimpressed into the fray, turning, stone-faced to Paul Mathur and enquiring: "D'you wanna get naked and go up a tree?"



One way of getting home...

Standards of personal hygiene varied


King Jake



Come on, you were there, you know why she was laughing

SECOND STAGE

DRUGSTORE have been touring since the ice age, so they've no right to sound this fresh, this moving, but "Favourite Sinner" – denying the existence of God but wanting to shoot the little f***er if he does – is still, will forever be, the story of my life, and they're the highlight of my day.

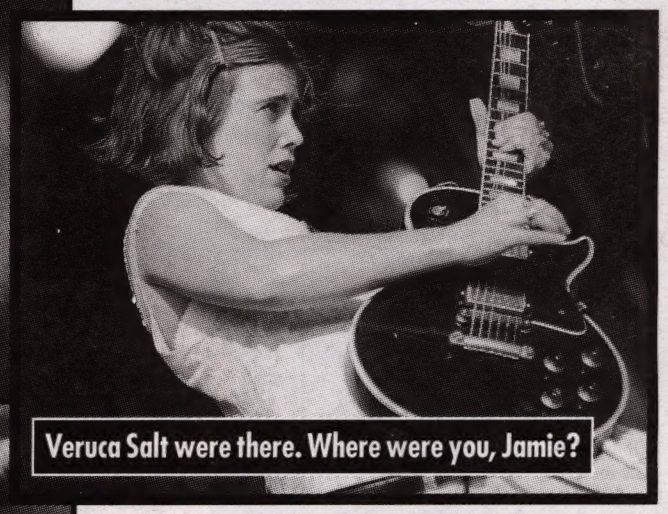
Most of the remaining acts are Britpop bands, the great *white* hopes we're encouraged to love because they're ours, and what a sorry, shabby lot they are. **MARION**, dressed in shirts Casey Kasem would dismiss as too gaudy, are a singularly joyless experience, party poopers trying to have fun. They're already keen to distance themselves from the "Dark Art" tag ("all that shite") but however much they protest otherwise, I, unlike some of my more sceptical colleagues still wholeheartedly believe they're troubled, tortured souls. Let's face it: if the highlight of your social calendar is a Sultans Of Ping gig, it must be pretty f***ing desperate.

THE VERVE are at least trying to be different. But they're hampered by two things a) they're still in love with hoary old rock traditions and b) they're clearly the sort of unreconstructed idiots who just do what they do and if anyone else likes it, it's a miracle.

I'd forgotten **THE CHARLATANS** existed. Lucky me.

Let's make a distinction: style Vs fashion. Style: individual, carefully considered, born of a desire to express your unique personality in dress and behaviour, regardless of current trends. Fashion: mindlessly aping whatever's currently "in", changing yourself so you to conform to someone else's agenda.

Pulp and Suede are stylish, but **MENSWEAR** are fashionable, or trying to be. Clinging tenaciously to the coattails of pretend pop, they're NWONW with better tailors, trading on the fact some people will automatically love any old drivel in ostrich feathers. And despite what you've been told elsewhere, there's nothing remarkable about their admission they're derivative – Oasis and Elastica already *flaunt* their lack of imagination (tonight, the latter introduce "Waking Up" as the "famous Stranglers song, "No More Heroes"). However, Taylor Parkes is correct in saying they persuade you to "let it drop." Sadly, I left the Acme 60 tonne weight I nicked off Wil E Coyote last week at home, so I'm forced to endure the entirety of their mercifully brief set. And I'm much better dressed than they are. Scruffy shits.



Veruca Salt were there. Where were you, Jamie?

I've always found it amusing that critics who profess to prefer mystery over meaning deify Morrissey, a man who spells out every point he makes in 50-foot red neon letters. But what's even funnier is watching them trying to recapture the good old days when they sat around their room listening to Smiths records and dreaming they had a life through **GENE**, who despite being the sound of imagination dying on the vine, are given a rapturous reception. Once again, they're a band who've acknowledged their ah, limitations, placating us with the promise they'll experiment at some unspecified future point. Hopes are high because they're claiming the second LP will be a radical change in direction, but people are forgetting that in band speak this usually means they've written lots of slow ballads or hired someone to do the odd string arrangement.

We'll see.

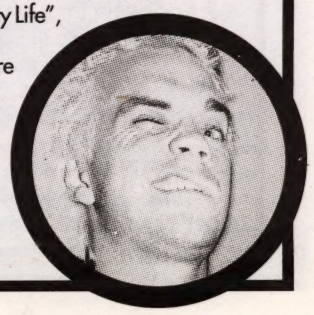
What I loathe about Britpop is it's so cloistered, conservative, deeply suspicious of new ideas. *Parochial.* Shouldn't it mean more than a *Saarf Lahndahn* accents and namechecking a few racetracks? More than recycling the Stranglers and Wire? **ELASTICA** don't seem to think so. I remain ambivalent towards them, but for me the only interesting part of their set comes when a streaker prances round the stage for the duration of "Vaseline" (they don't play "Indian Song".) And isn't it strange that critics who favour music over text are hailing them as something new because of their lyrics?

But are any of these acts really Britpop? That term should denote something which reflects our nation's multicultural diversity, the length and breadth of the "British" experience. These acts already exist, though they're not always acknowledged as such: PJ Harvey, Earthling (who played a mind bendingly brilliant set yesterday, incidentally), Cornershop, Stereolab, Rockers Hi-Fi, Laika, and yes, **GOLDIE**.

I was disappointed by "Inner City Life", but still harboured high hopes for his set, if only because there's more imagination in even a duff jungle track than there was in most of today's acts. But we had to leave before he came onstage to meet the deadline for this issue.

Ho hum.

(JTC)



That fat f***er out of Menswear